

## MINUTES

The Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government & International Studies  
Regional School Board Regular Meeting  
1000 N. Lombardy Street, Richmond, VA

**Thursday, October 17, 2024**

**9:00 a.m.**

### **I. Call to Order**

Kenneth Pritchett, Chair of the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School Regional Board, called the meeting to order.

### **II. Moment of Silence**

The Chair called for a moment of silence.

### **III. Pledge of Allegiance**

The Regional School Board and visitors stood and recited the pledge of allegiance.

### **IV. Introductions**

Each member is listed in alphabetical order by locality.

#### **Present:**

Ms. Lisa Hudgins, *School Board*, Chesterfield County Public Schools

Mr. Steven Neece, *School Board*, Colonial Heights Public Schools

Dr. Elaine Pearson *School Board*, Dinwiddie Public Schools

Ms. Meredith Moses, *School Board*, Goochland County Public Schools

Ms. Alicia Atkins, *School Board*, Henrico County Public Schools

Ms. Linda Hyslop, *School Board*, Hopewell Public Schools

Ms. Harwood Hall, *School Board*, King & Queen Public

Ms. Heather Donbrosky, *School Board*, New Kent Public Schools

Mr. Kenneth Pritchett, *School Board*, Petersburg Public Schools

Dr. James Taylor, *School Board*, Powhatan County Public Schools

Dr. Dalphine Joppy, **Superintendent**, Charles City Public Schools (late arrival)

Ms. Brianna Gunn for the **Interim Superintendent**, Chesterfield County Public Schools

Mr. Travis Ridley for Ms. Haidee Napier, **Superintendent**, Colonial Heights Public Schools

Ms. Michelle Powell for Dr. Kari Weston, **Superintendent**, Dinwiddie Public Schools

Dr. Michael Cromartie, **Superintendent**, Goochland County Public Schools

Ms. Jennifer Greif for Dr. Lisa Pennycuff, **Interim Superintendent**, Hanover County Public Schools

Dr. Amy Cashwell, **Superintendent**, Henrico County Public Schools

Ms. Jan Butterworth for Dr. Melody Hackney, **Superintendent**, Hopewell Public Schools

Ms. Yolanda Brown, **Interim Superintendent**, Petersburg Public Schools

Dr. Beth Teigen, **Superintendent**, Powhatan County Public Schools  
Ms. Melanie Ficke for Dr. Douglas Lyle **Superintendent**, Prince George Public Schools  
Dr. Robert Lowerre, **Director**, Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School  
Ms. Barbara Marshall, **Clerk**, Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School  
Mr. Lucas Veale, **Deputy Clerk**, Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School

**Also present:**

Dr. Lisa Williams and Dr. Max Smith – MLWGS Administration  
David Bortz– MLWGS Staff  
Ginger O’Neil – MW Foundation Executive Director

**Absent:**

Ms. Marchelle Hampton **School Board**, Charles City Public Schools  
Mr. Bob May, **School Board**, Hanover County Public Schools  
Ms. Jill Andrews, **School Board**, Prince George Public Schools  
Ms. Mariah White, **School Board**, Richmond Public Schools

Dr. Carol Carter, **Superintendent**, King & Queen Public Schools  
Dr. Brian Nichols, **Superintendent**, New Kent Public Schools  
Mr. Jason Kamras, **Superintendent**, Richmond Public Schools

**V.a Approval for Board Member(s) to Participate in this Meeting Remotely**

I. Quorum Physically Assembled

- A. The Regional School Board may conduct any meeting wherein the public business is discussed or transacted through electronic communication means if 1) on or before the day of a meeting, a member of the Regional School Board notifies the chair that such member is unable to attend the meeting due to a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition that prevents the member's physical attendance or that such member is unable to attend the meeting due to a personal matter and identifies with specificity the nature of the personal matter; and 2) **the Regional School Board approves the member’s participation by a majority vote of the members present at the primary or central meeting location.**

No action was needed, and there were no requests for remote participation.

**V.b Approval of Agenda**

On a motion by Linda Hyslop, seconded by Heather Donbrosky, the agenda for this meeting was unanimously approved on a voice vote.

**VI. Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by Elaine Pearson, seconded by Alicia Atkins, the minutes of the September 18, 2024, regular meeting were unanimously approved on a voice vote.

## VII. Recognitions

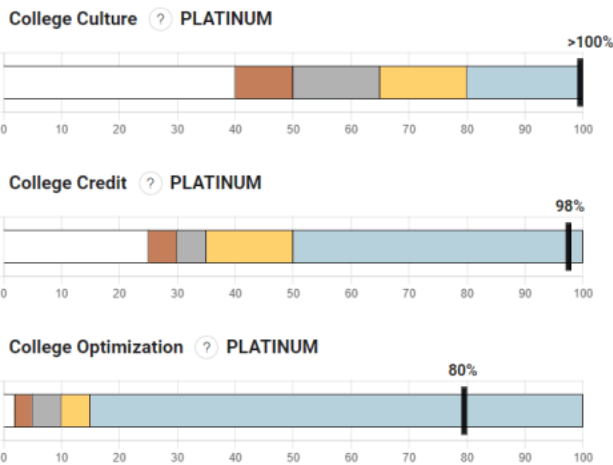
- The College Board announced that Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School has been named to the 2024 Advanced Placement® Program (AP®) School Honor Roll, earning PLATINUM distinction. On hand for recognition were senior counselors Dr. Rachel Loving and Ms. Kimberly Forquer.

The AP® School Honor Roll recognizes schools whose AP programs are delivering results for students while broadening access. Schools can earn this recognition annually based on criteria that reflect a commitment to increasing college-going culture, providing opportunities for students to earn college credit, and maximizing college readiness.

Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School administered 1,455 assessments for 518 students who took at least one AP exam in 2024, with 94.4% scoring a three or higher on at least one AP exam.

Congratulations! Maggie L Walker Governor's Sch Gov't Int'l Stds has earned Platinum recognition on the 2024 AP School Honor Roll.

Class of 2024



[View a table version of this information on the next tab.](#)



**PLATINUM**

AP 2024 School Honor Roll

Maggie L Walker Governor's Sch Gov't Int'l Stds

Your school achieved all criteria to be listed on this year's AP School Honor Roll as a **Platinum** school!

For planning and goal-setting, the three criteria for **PLATINUM** schools are:

- Expand your school's college culture by enabling **80% of your Class of 2025** to experience 1 AP course before graduating.
- Assist with college affordability by enabling **50% of your Class of 2025** to earn college credit by earning an AP Exam score of 3.
- Optimize student's college readiness by creating opportunities for **15% of your Class of 2025** to take a total of 5 APs across their high school years, with at least 1 taken in 9th or 10th grade.

To qualify for the 2024 AP School Honor Roll, schools must meet or exceed the criteria for a given recognition level for all three metrics. This report always reflects the most recent data for your organization. Additional information about the AP School Honor Roll can be found on [AP Central](#).

## VIII. Public Comments

The Public Information Period shall not exceed thirty (30) minutes. Each speaker will be allotted three (3) minutes to make his/her comments. Individuals representing groups will be allotted five (5) minutes.

*No comments were received or presented.*

**IX. Consent Items**

On a motion by Meredith Moses to approve consent items as a slate, seconded by Elaine Pearson, the following items were unanimously approved on a voice vote: current personnel actions, fiscal status reports for October 2024, and the donations report for October 2024.

**X. Action Items**

**a. International Trip Proposal, France, 2025 – *Second Read***

**SPONSOR: LINDSEY LECROY-WHITWORTH  
FRANCE, MARCH 29 – APRIL 4, 2025 (9 days)**

**This is a new trip proposal.**

This trip is a destination for the “Power of Story: Teaching Narrative Through Travel Writing” seminar for the 2024-2025 school year. Throughout the year, students will learn narrative and travel narrative writing techniques in various forms. Students will write their own piece each quarter, modeling the elements and learning techniques from their growing toolbox. They will document Paris from the very beginning – planning and packing for the trip and write throughout the entire duration of the 4-night stay in the heart of Paris.

Maximum number of students = 12.

The number of chaperones is designed for a 6:1 adult/student ratio.

Estimate per Student Cost: \$3,000 before MLWGS Foundation subsidy.

On a motion by Alicia Atkins, seconded by Elaine Pearson, the international trip proposal to France 2025 was unanimously approved on a voice vote.

**b. Policy and Regulation Updates – *Second Read***

The Policy Steering Committee offers the following for Regional School Board consideration.

No.#		New/Amended	Actions
	<b>Foundations</b>		
None			
	<b>School Board Governance</b>		
1020	Electronic Participation in School Board Meetings from Remote Locations	Amended	Revised to reflect the requirement of annual adoption added to VA Code.
	<b>Administration</b>		

	None			
		<b>Instruction</b>		
	3001.1	Notifications of Learning Objectives	Amended	Grammatical correction plus changing “school board” back to “school year” because it was errantly changed in the May 2024 update.
		<b>Student Services</b>		
	4045	Student Records	Amended	Cross-reference added. Policy updated to avoid duplication of information in Pol 6000.1 regarding fees for copying records (pg 6).
		<b>Human Resources</b>		
	5004	Professional Staff	Amended	Clarifying language was added to the first and second bullets.
		<b>Community Relations</b>		
	None			
		<b>Finance &amp; Operations</b>		
	None			
		<b>Student Conduct</b>		
	None			

On a motion by James Taylor, seconded by Meredith Moses, the August 2024 VSBA policy updates were unanimously approved on a voice vote.

**c. Potential for Unused Snow Days 2025 – *Second Read***

The director’s proposal: If Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School has one unused snow day by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025; Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup> may become a student and staff holiday. If there are two unused snow days by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025; Monday, April 7<sup>th</sup> may also become a student and staff holiday.

Ms. Moses inquired whether parents would be notified as soon as possible about potential school closures. Dr. Lowerre replied, "Absolutely." He mentioned that since MW is a high school, its students do not require daycare, and parents are generally supportive or neutral regarding unscheduled snow days.

Dr. Taylor inquired about possibly incorporating unused snow days, particularly around the Friday and Monday of spring break, into the school calendar in the future. Dr. Lowerre clarified that we currently reserve five snow days (utilizing both days and class time) in the operating calendar. However, the school relies on district transportation, and unlike our district schools, MW cannot conduct half days for staff professional development.

During the follow-up discussion, Ms. Moses asked an important question regarding a regional program. She inquired about the procedure for closing if one of the districts decides to do so. Dr. Lowerre responded, acknowledging the significance of her question, and used this opportunity to inform the newer board members who might not be familiar with the situation.

He stated, “Safety comes first!” Dr. Lowerre explained that while Maggie Walker may remain open if a student resides in a district that has chosen to close, the absence is considered excused, and the student is not required to attend school. The school communicates this policy clearly to parents.

Dr. Lowerre noted that the school's decision to close will be based on the choices made by our largest districts—Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico, and Richmond—which together represent 82% of our student body. If the closing decisions are evenly split, we will take into account what Richmond chooses to do, given our physical location in the city. He also mentioned that the most challenging scenario occurs when the decision is made after buses have already begun their morning routes. He emphasized that we also consider the safety of our young drivers within the student body, as their well-being is a priority.

There being no further questions, on a motion by Heather Donbrosky, seconded by Harwood Hall, the director’s proposal for the potential use of snow days if available in 2025 was unanimously approved on a voice vote.

## **XI. Director’s Report**

### ***A. Verbal Updates***

- **Congratulations to the (8) National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalists from the MLWGS Class of 2025**

Officials of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) announced on September 11, the names of approximately 16,000 semi-finalists in the 70th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. These academically talented high school seniors have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 6,870 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$26 million that will be offered next spring.

To be considered for a Merit Scholarship award, semifinalists must fulfill several requirements to advance to the finalist level of the competition. About 95 percent of the semifinalists are expected to attain finalist standing, and approximately half of the finalists will win a National Merit Scholarship, earning the Merit Scholar title.

National Merit Scholarship winners of 2025 will be announced in four nationwide news releases beginning in April and concluding in July. These scholarship recipients will join nearly 382,000 other distinguished young people who have earned the Merit Scholar title. This year MLWGS has eight National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalists from the Class of 2025, two from Henrico, four from Chesterfield, one from Hanover, and one from Richmond. Congratulations to our seniors:

Hasika Aaravabhoomi - Henrico  
Winston Crane - Richmond  
Arnav Kadambi - Henrico  
Michael Klausner - Chesterfield  
Ethan Ngai - Hanover  
Samantha Schappert - Chesterfield  
Brenden Stremmer - Chesterfield  
Reese Wu - Chesterfield

Much appreciation and thanks go out to MLWGS Senior Counselors Dr. Rachel Loving and Ms. Kimberly Forquer for your steady guidance of our students through this program.

- **Congratulations to the (43) MLWGS Commended Students by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation from the Class of 2025**

This year MLWGS has forty-three National Merit Scholarship Commended Students from the Class of 2025, **Henrico = 21, Chesterfield = 10, Richmond = 7, Goochland = 2, Hanover = 1, Colonial Heights = 1, and New Kent = 1**. Congratulations to our seniors:

Ronald Angert - Henrico
Sanjay Anup – Henrico
Aditya Badhrayan – Henrico
Charles Bell - Chesterfield
Matthew Bond – Henrico
Jennifer Chau – Henrico
Connor Cloe - Chesterfield
Cole Fisher - Richmond
Sreemayi Gangireddy - Henrico
Lucy Gates - Chesterfield
Olin Gunlicks – Richmond
Celia Harrison – Colonial Heights
Isaiah Hathaway – Hanover
Bennett Huddle - Richmond
Brinda Iyer – Henrico
Ryan Karami – Henrico
Soumya Khadye – Henrico
William Knutson – Goochland
Nathan Lee - Chesterfield
Brie Lefkowitz - Richmond
Zhicheng Li – Henrico
Allison Lichtman - Henrico
Aarav Lodha - Henrico
Francis Lowden - Henrico
Mercedes Luna - Chesterfield
Arjun Majety - Henrico
Sahana Manohar – Chesterfield
Sriyutha Morishetty – Henrico
Molly Morrison - Chesterfield
Ella Nock - Henrico

Elizabeth O'Shea - Chesterfield
Ritvika Palani – Henrico
Kavi Rajappa – Henrico
Akshaya Ramasamy - Henrico
Ian Sexton - Richmond
Michael Taylor III - Chesterfield
Matthew Tran - Goochland
Davis Voelzke - Henrico
Katherine Watson - Chesterfield
Maxwell Whealton – New Kent
Anna Widmer - Richmond
Chanan Wijesooriya – Richmond
Melody Yuan - Henrico

About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Commended Students placed among the top 50,000 students who entered the 2025 competition by taking the 2023 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). "Those being named Commended Students have demonstrated outstanding potential for academic success," commented a spokesperson for NMSC. "These students represent a valuable national resource; recognizing their accomplishments, as well as the key role their schools play in their academic development, is vital to the advancement of educational excellence in our nation.

- **VDOE Site Evaluation Team on Campus October 8-10** (*Also see Item XI.f below for VDOE Statement on Evaluation*)

Conducted every five years by the VDOE, a team of other GS administrators and teachers is sent to do an on-site evaluation of the program. This year they were tasked with the evaluation of Maggie Walker Governor’s School standards. After 2.5 days they had a fantastic experience at Maggie Walker, stating ‘We’ve never been to a school that meets or exceeds all criteria standards.’ The team’s official report will be issued later this year and will be shared with the board.

- **Fall Festival RAIN DATE at MLWGS was Friday, October 11, 2-6:30 pm**

The MLWGS Fall Festival was on Friday, October 11, from 2 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The PTSA sponsors this event to celebrate our school’s international focus, offering clubs and classes a lively and enjoyable venue for community building and fundraising. Our students and clubs were excitedly preparing to host their booths and provide unforgettable entertainment.

**Fall Festival raised approximately \$7,000 for our various clubs.** Even with our date change, we had amazing booth sponsors, volunteer signups, record-breaking ticket sales for the fest, passion from our entertainers, and fantastic student involvement. Fall Festival's beauty is providing a safe space for our students to learn how to organize activities, recruit volunteers,



work within rules/regulations, fundraise for future benefits, muster the courage to perform in front of crowds, and so much more.

- **STEM Day at MLWGS on Saturday, October 12, Sponsored by the Mech Tech Dragons (Robotics)**

The 8th Annual STEM Event for middle school students was on October 12th from 1-4 PM. We had presenters ranging from Video Game Design to Physical Therapy to Robotics.



- **PSAT 2025 is Friday, October 18**

PSAT Day will take place on Friday, October 18<sup>th</sup> starting at 8:40. The PSATs will be **digital** to prepare students for digital SATs in Spring 2025. It is important for families to review the [MLWGS Digital PSAT Information](#) to prepare for test day.

You are allowed to use your personal device for testing. Personal devices can include a Mac or Windows device or an iPad. You are not allowed to use a personal Chromebook. Your device must also be able to connect to Wi-Fi and be charged enough to stay on for roughly 3 hours. We recommend you bring a power cord or portable charger, but we can't guarantee you'll have access to an outlet. You're permitted to bring an external mouse for your device and an external keyboard if your device is a tablet. You can't use detachable device privacy screens. All other applications and programs must be closed during the test.

- **Homecoming Dance, Saturday, October 19, 7-10 pm**

The Homecoming Dance was **Saturday, October 19th from 7:00 to 10:00 PM**. The theme for the event is “Casino Night.”

Each year, the Junior class hosts the MLWGS Homecoming Dance. The dance was open to all MLWGS students and their dates if they chose to bring one.

- **Mark your Calendar: VIRTUAL FY26 Budget Development Town Hall**, December 10, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. We welcome engagement in discussion around our FY26 budget.

- **Recruitment Continues for the Class of 2029:**

- In-Person Information Forums at MLWGS, Saturday, October 26, 2024
  - MLWGS will present an information forum for students and families interested in knowing more about the program and the admissions process on the school campus, on Saturday, October 26th. There will be three 90-minute sessions divided by district. The sessions are as follows: 8 AM–Hanover and Richmond, 10 AM–Colonial Heights, Dinwiddie, Henrico, Hopewell, King & Queen, Petersburg, and Prince George, and 1 PM–Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, New Kent, and Powhatan
- Recruitment Efforts: Planning Committee, recruitment material dissemination, etc, and
- Middle School Visits

- **REMINDER: FUTURE Lombardy Street Bridge Replacement Construction Project**

Members of facilities, security, and administration have met with the Richmond Dept of Public Works to discuss the Lombardy St. bridge replacement. I have included 2 maps to illustrate my summary below.

- **The earliest the project could begin is the Fall of 2025**
  - The project will take approximately 2 years to complete
  - The staging area for equipment may come out as far as the entrance to the student parking lot but no further. No further, however. We will still have full use of our entrance and exit (see attached).
    - For many here, this will be a benefit as our lot's exit will become right turn only
    - For some here, this will impose a detour of 2-3 miles (see attached). This detour will also impact several of our buses.
  - RDPW and WRA (the firm handling the construction) are looking into the costs and feasibility of a pedestrian bridge to keep the two sides of Lombardy connected (MW & UU).
- **MLWGS With Five R.E.B. Finalists 2024:** Dickson Benesh, Jeff Hall, Lindsey LeCroy-Whitworth, NaKita Lee, and Steve Ross.



**B. Coming Events**

October 17, 2024, through November 14, 2024

Thursday, October 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Regional School Board Meeting, 9:00 am, MLWGS Room 153</b>
Friday, October 18 <sup>th</sup>	<b>PSAT Testing for Sophomores and Juniors</b>
	Afternoon Field Day Activities including Pep Rally
Saturday, October 19 <sup>th</sup>	Homecoming Dance at MLWGS, 7:00 pm
Monday, October 21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Student Holiday/Teacher Workday</b>
	<b>RPS MS Visit at Dogwood, 10:00 am</b>
	<b>RPS MS Visit at Boushall, 1:30 pm</b>
Tuesday, October 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>RPS MS Visit at Albert Hill, 10:00 am</b>
	<b>RPS MS Visit at Henderson, 1:30 pm</b>
Wednesday, October 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>RPS MS Visit at MLK, 10:30 am</b>
	<b>RPS MS Visit at River City School, 2:30 pm</b>
Thursday, October 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>RPS MS Visit at Franklin Military, 10:30 am</b>
	Science National Honor Society Induction Ceremony, 11:30 am, Auditorium

	<b>RPS MS Visit at Brown, 3:00 pm</b>
Friday, October 25 <sup>th</sup>	Blood Drive at MLWGS, 9:00 am- 2:00 pm, Rooms 104 & 105
Saturday, October 26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Information Forum Day for the Class of 2029, 8:00 am – 3:30 pm</b>
Monday, October 28 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Hanover MS Visit at Atlee, 5:30 pm</b>
Tuesday, October 29 <sup>th</sup>	Q1 Report Cards Issued
Wednesday, October 30 <sup>th</sup>	Diwali Celebration, 11:30 am – 12:20 pm, Black Box & Commons
Thursday, October 31 <sup>st</sup>	Freshman Advisory Workshop, 11:45 am – 12:30 pm, Auditorium
Friday, November 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Holiday – School Closed</b>
Monday, November 4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Student Holiday/Virtual Parent-Teacher Conferences, 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm, and 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm</b>
Tuesday, November 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Election Day Holiday – School Closed for Instruction</b>
Wednesday, November 6 <sup>th</sup>	November Faculty Meeting, 3:30 pm, Forum
Friday, November 8 <sup>th</sup> - Saturday, November 9 <sup>th</sup>	Senior Regional Orchestra Competition, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
Monday, November 11 <sup>th</sup>	Veteran’s Day
	First Day of Winter Sports
Tuesday, November 12 <sup>th</sup>	VML Math Contest at MLWGS, 11:40 am, Auditorium
Thursday, November 14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Executive School Board Meeting, 9:00 am, MLWGS Room 153</b>

**C. 2025-2026 Division Slot Commitments**

As MLWGS begins the planning process for the next school term as directed by Policy 1029 adopted May 18, 2000, amended December 18, 2014, December 17, 2015, and October 15, 2020, it annually seeks this slot commitment statement from participating divisions.

Letters were provided to participating school divisions for their 2025-2026 student enrollment commitment. Note that each letter should be executed by the division superintendent and school board member and returned to MLWGS by December 1, 2024.

Dr. Lowerre stated these commitments are the cornerstone of our budget build. Once we have an idea of how many students you will send to us, we start to frame things up regarding staffing.

**D. New Club Proposals from Students**

Policy 4030-R

Each new club proposal requires a constitution in which students describe what the new club will do at club activities and what its purpose will be.

\***A reconstituted student club** is defined as an active, not on probation, established related student interest club, special interest club, service club, club sports non-VHSL, or performance club that can demonstrate active membership and activities.

Seniors can not propose a new club. If a junior starts a club, there must be at least half sophomores or freshmen on the initial application. The club will then be on probation for one year. This allows time for the club to establish any long-term projects or outreach.

Student organizations must be sponsored by one or more faculty members. Sponsorship is considered in the vetting process.

Upon Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School Administrative approval, club materials will be provided to the Regional School Board for their information.

The following was vetted by Paige Hawkins, AD, and operating as a new club this year:

<b>Club Name</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Stipend</b>
1) Japanese Culture Club	Sponsored by Yoko Eshita	\$0.00
2) Little Scientists	Sponsored by Hillary Gawne	\$0.00
3) Neurodivergent Students’ Alliance	Sponsored by Kayleigh Conner	\$0.00
4) Paws Club	Sponsored by Ashley Sigrest	\$0.00
5) WiSTEM (Women in Stem)	Sponsored by Heather Kemmerly	\$0.00

This item is offered for regional board information.

***E. MLWGS Foundation Impact Report w/Ginger O’Neil, Director***

Ms. Ginger O’Neil was available to present this report to the board.

The MW Foundation's mission is to cultivate resources to enhance the educational experience for all students at MLWGS. The vision is for all MLWGS students to have access to educational resources and experiences to reach their full potential.

Last year the Foundation provided 93 enhancement grants to the school for student travel and academic enrichment, teacher professional development, and student financial assistance. \$195,000 is committed for the 2024-25 academic year for these areas.

Ms. O’Neil provided background on several Foundation additional programs including alumni outreach, grandparent’s and special friends day, The Pat Taylor Teaching Award, the bi-annual alumni showcase, Night of the Dragon auction, and the annual Director’s Circle Reception.

Through dollars raised from parents, alumni, alumni families, and the community, the MLWGS Foundation has provided more than \$2.2 million in enhancements since its founding.

The chair thanked the Foundation and expressed his appreciation for how it gives back to the school community.

## **F. Administrative Summary of the VDOE Site Evaluation, October 8-10**

# 2024 VDOE Site Evaluation

10/8/24-10/10/24

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

This document summarizes takeaways from a preview of the site evaluation provided to the administrative team on the morning of October 10th. The formal report will be available in 1-2 months.

## COMMENDATIONS

*The team heard the word opportunity in focus groups, interviews, and surveys. They felt that our community exemplified citizenship as a shared and lived value. We are the only school the team had given "meets or exceeds" for all evaluation categories.*

1. Instruction—rigorous, student-centered, differentiated, student choice, student goal setting & reflection; recognized for providing creative, rigorous, and impactful learning
2. Unique courses/programs—seminars, mentorships, electives, 'intensive level,' ungraded classrooms, College Kickoff, Alumni Showcase
3. New initiatives- MLWGS 101, Walker Welcome Day, Dragon Advisory, Subcommittee structure
4. Student leadership- Clubs, Orgs, Sports, Student Ambassadors, Peer Mentors, Advisory Mentors
5. Support- Foundation, PTSA, salary equalization and decompression
6. PD program- cultural competency, wellness, gifted certification
7. Recruitment- Role of the Planning Committee, Dare to be a Dragon Day, Middle School Counselor Day
8. Well-being—Counseling (support and advocacy)
9. Efficiency- support staff (attention and concern regarding a range of matters)
10. Admin and leadership team—vision and strategic plan, goal-setting, reflection and accountability
11. Core Values- Walker Way, student agency, civility statement, student advocacy flowchart, inclusion, Honor Code



## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Consider a one-to-one initiative to support meaningful incorporation of technology in the classroom. Consider a sustainable funding mechanism.
2. PD should be provided to support technology implementation/inclusion into the curriculum.
3. Consider funding more capital improvement through public-private partnerships or more significant support from the Regional School Board.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What is the role of our mission in the school's identity? As we draft our next strategic plan, how do we focus on government & international studies while being 'good at everything'?
2. How do we promote equity and excellence simultaneously?
3. What is the balance of seminars, unique electives, SGC, and *intensive* courses versus the more prescriptive AP & DE courses?

## NEXT STEPS

1. Discussions of site evaluation within departments, leadership team, and school board (Fall 2024-Spring 2025)
2. Budget season to focus on our priorities (Winter 2024-Spring 2025)
3. Drafting a new Strategic Plan (Spring 2025)

## XII. Unfinished Business

### A. *Strategic Plan Implementation Report*

The Strategic Plan implementation update is located at the end of these minutes.

The director stated there is no update on the current plan but reminded the board development of the next 5-year strategic plan will start in January.

## XIII. Materials for Board Review and/or Discussion

- **None**

## XIV. Information Items

- Finance Committee Minutes, October 2, 2024
- PBS Documentary on We the People Competition, MLWGS Team Included
- September Department of the Month at MLWGS, Counseling
- Alumni Showcase at MLWGS, September 27, 2024, and Life Lessons From Our Alumni
- MLWGS Bhangra Club wins 2nd Place Trophy at Festival of India
- 156 New Members Inducted to the National Honor Society at MLWGS, September 30, 2024
- Scholar-Athlete of the Week, Sept. 16, 2024 (Wk #1) - Lydia Shields ('25, Richmond) - XC

- Scholar-Athlete of the Week, Sept. 23, 2024 (Wk #2) - Callan Vellozzi ('28, Chesterfield) - Golf
- Scholar-Athlete of the Week, Sept. 30, 2024 (Wk #3) - Des Unicee ('26, Richmond) - Volleyball
- Scholar-Athlete of the Week, Oct. 7, 2024 (Wk #4) - Skye Cummings ('25-Richmond) - Field Hockey

#### **XV. Superintendent's Steering Committee Report**

No report was presented, and no meeting was held.

#### **XVI. New Business**

School Board Self-Evaluation 2024. Ten board members participated in their self-evaluation tool 2024; Steven Neece-Colonial Heights, Elaine Pearson-Dinwiddie, Meredith Moses-Goochland, Alicia Atkins-Henrico, Linda Hyslop-Hopewell, Harwood Hall-King & Queen, Heather Donbrosky-New Kent, Kenneth Pritchett-Petersburg, James Taylor-Powhatan, and Mariah White-Richmond. The board discussed the results.

Dr. Lowerre discussed areas for growth identified by the board, particularly regarding the information needed for effective board performance. He expressed uncertainty about the board's expectations regarding the type of information it requires, especially since most members meet only five times per year. Historically, there were board members who attended infrequently and tended to want quick meetings, leading Dr. Lowerre to adapt to that dynamic. He noted that this current board may be more engaged and seeking a different approach.

Dr. Lowerre highlighted that the full school board previously met ten times a year. There was no executive board at that time, but a former member advocated for the formation of an executive committee to reduce meeting frequency, but eventually, they departed from the board. As a result, the full board now only meets five times a year, primarily to focus on budget adoption. He emphasized the importance of the board discussing and clarifying what it wants from the director. Additionally, he is ready to implement any necessary structural information systems or materials to ensure that the board receives valuable data and achieves a good return on its district investment.

The chair asked the members for their thoughts on organizing a training or an in-service session to discuss the board's vision and future direction. He received positive feedback on this idea. Ms. Atkins expressed interest in learning about the board's history to help establish a vision moving forward and would support some form of retreat or training. Ms. Hudgins noted that, in her experience as a board member, the school is well-managed. She mentioned that her board had recently acknowledged the PSAT scholars, and half of them came from MW. Although she admitted to being very busy, she felt connected to the school and praised the management of the meetings. She concluded by saying, "I wouldn't say no to a retreat."

Mr. Neece expressed his satisfaction with the director's transparency and responsiveness on topics that require in-depth discussion. He mentioned that while a retreat could help establish a foundation, the ongoing operation of the system has been going very well.



Dr. Taylor added that having an orientation would have been beneficial for him to acclimate to the board. Aside from that, he agrees that the meetings are running smoothly.

Dr. Pearson expressed her desire to get to know the other board members better, noting that unless they meet at another conference, they have limited opportunities to see one another. She mentioned that she has enjoyed being on the executive board and attending every meeting, as it has kept her well-informed.

Dr. Lowerre encouraged any board member to reach out to him at any time for an orientation-style meeting.

Mr. Pritchett stated that Petersburg offered their entire board tours of the three specialty schools as part of their orientation, which could serve as a useful model for other boards. Dr. Lowerre agreed that this was an excellent idea, noting that for many of your colleagues, MW is merely a line item in the budget.

Ms. Marshall reminded the longer-serving board members that before the COVID pandemic, they used to schedule luncheons between board members and some of their students. The chair acknowledged that these luncheons were always informative, as the students would honestly share their concerns.

Dr. Lowerre expressed a desire to plan a board retreat in early 2025, aiming to foster relationships among members while also linking it to the development of the new strategic plan. This would stimulate discussions that could contribute ideas for the new plan. Ms. Atkins added that the orientation was extremely helpful for her understanding of her commitments as a board member.

Mr. Pritchett also reminded the members that there would be an election in January for a new board chair and vice-chair.

#### **XVII. Closed Meeting**

None.

#### **XVIII. Certification of Closed Meeting**

None.

#### **XIX. Announcements/Additional Discussion**

None.

#### **XX. Adjournment of Regular Meeting**

On a motion by Meredith Moses, seconded by Elaine Pearson, the meeting was adjourned on a unanimous voice vote at 10:10 am.

**Next Meeting**

Executive Board on November 14, 2024, at 9:00 am. MLWGS, 1000 N. Lombardy St., Room 153, Richmond, VA 23220. 804-354-6800 x2190.

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Kenneth Pritchett, Chair

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Robert Lowerre, Ph.D., Director

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Minutes Recorded by:  
Barbara Marshall, Regional Board Clerk

MLWGS 2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS/OBJECTIVES/ACTION STEPS

DATE: October 17, 2024

Blue Text = Updates

Green = Completed

GOAL 1	MAGGIE L. WALKER GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL WILL CREATE A WELCOMING AND RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT CELEBRATES AND REFLECTS THE DIVERSITY OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS WE SERVE AND FOSTERS A SENSE OF BELONGING FOR ALL.	Responsible Party	Measurement	Year to begin Implementation	Cost to Budget
OBJ 1.1	MLWGS will engage and educate our school districts about the opportunities available to them in our learning environment.			2020	
1.1.2	Develop and enhance relationships with districts, schools, administrators, counselors, teachers, parents, and potential students.	Administration, Counseling, Faculty	We are establishing relationships with local administrators through outreach. A middle school counselor day took place in September of 2022. Dare to be a Dragon Day took place for 5 <sup>th</sup> grade students in April 2023. We have hired a Coordinator for Strategic Engagement who will assist in implementing strategies for increased community outreach. While this goal is ongoing, the framework has been completed.		
OBJ 1.2	MLWGS will create an environment that provides a sense of belonging and fosters student and family engagement.				
1.2.1	Examine and eliminate structural barriers that prevent students from availing themselves of all the opportunities at MLWGS.	Planning Committee, Administration, Foundation	Fall Festival begins before the end of the school day to eliminate		

			the barrier of transportation. Also, SAC conducted a student survey during Fall Festival to determine ways to eliminate barriers related to accessing and participating in activities		
1.2.2	<b>Access to wraparound services (Identify and fill gaps in student mental health and wellness programs)</b>	School Counseling	A Full-time School Social Worker has been hired. Professional Development efforts for 2023 will focus on wellness and mindfulness.		
1.2.3	<b>Review and reform policies and procedures that impede inclusion (e.g. mental health intake, bathroom policies, club and extra-curricular policies)</b>	Counseling, Administration, AD, School Board	Bathroom policies have been addressed.		
1.2.4	<b>Enhance communications to make sure students have knowledge of and are able to seek resources</b>	Counseling	The Counseling Department has sent out multiple messages regarding mental health resources as well as holding parent training sessions.		
1.2.5	<b>Facilitate student input and feedback</b>	Administration, Counseling	Surveys completed by SAC and VSCS. New Outreach Coordinator will facilitate new surveys.		
1.2.6	<b>Analyze and strengthen the student onboarding process to prepare accepted students for the MLWGS experience</b>	Counseling	Freshman Orientation is being studied as well as the process for registering for classes. Piloting Dragon Dialogues. The Walker Way Welcome Day was implemented in August 2022 and will happen again in 2023. A visit to TJST is taking		

			place in November of 2023 to observe their freshman onboarding program.		
1.2.7	<b>Equip faculty with tools to foster an inclusive environment</b>	Administration, External Trainers	Year one of Cultural Competency PD has been completed. Year two has also been completed culminating in a full-day of PD on belonging led by a DEI expert. Year Three will include resources and activities on equity and inclusion.		
<b>OBJ 1.3</b>	<b>MLWGS will codevelop a plan with its districts to increase enrollment of historically underserved populations.</b>				
1.3.1	<b>In compliance with FY 2021 Budget Item 145, C-27,I, the school will work with the partner districts to collect application and admission data to be used to support a plan to increase the percentage of historically underserved populations at MLWGS.</b>	Dr. Lowerre	We have been working with districts to improve access for underserved minorities. Significant improvement has been made this year. RSB approved removal of Achievement Test as part of admissions process.		
<b>OBJ. 1.4</b>	<b>MLWGS will develop a strategy to increase the demographic diversity of our faculty and staff.</b>				
1.4.1	<b>Examine barriers to hiring and retaining diverse faculty.</b>	Dr. Lowerre, Dr. Williams,	Recruitment sub-committee has been created. A focused effort has been made to recruit a highly qualified and diverse faculty and staff that mirrors the diversity of our population.		

1.4.2	Strengthen professional development resources for faculty.	Dr. Williams, Dr. Lowerre, Mr. Smith	Comprehensive PD has begun with positive feedback from staff.		
1.4.3	Develop hiring strategy.	Leadership Team	We have actively targeted HBCUs and other colleges with information about employment openings.		
1.4.4	Develop outreach program for recruiting teachers from multiple districts and education graduate schools.	Dr. Lowerre	We have actively targeted HBCUs and other colleges with information about employment openings.		
<b>GOAL 2</b>	<b>MAGGIE L. WALKER GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL WILL ENGAGE STUDENTS WITH INNOVATIVE CURRICULA AND RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION THAT FOCUSES ON STUDENT-CENTERED EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING. INSTRUCTION WILL BE INTERDISCIPLINARY AND ENRICHED BY LOCAL AND GLOBAL CONNECTEDNESS.</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Measurement</b>	<b>Year to begin Implementation</b>	<b>Cost to Budget</b>
				<b>2020-2021</b>	
<b>OBJ 2.1</b>	<b>Students will engage in exciting distinctive courses that are designed to deepen students interest.</b>				
2.1.1	Encourage a collaborative environment for ongoing innovation of all course offerings.	Admin, School Counseling	New classes have been offered and recommended for future years		
2.1.2	Expand dual enrollment course offerings and include courses through additional university partners.	Dr. Lowerre	Meetings with VCU are ongoing and we have established a strong dual enrollment program.		
2.1.3	Investigate offering courses with comparatively smaller student enrollment.	Admin and School counseling	We allowed classes to "make" this year with lower enrollments.		
2.1.4	Expand the menu of teacher-created courses that center on experiential learning, interdisciplinary and global awareness.	Admin and Department Chairs	New Seminar courses are being offered including ones that target undertaught areas. Several		

			new courses have been added to the Course Catalog.		
2.1.5	Expand student enrollment in SGC's and teacher-developed courses.	Dr. Lowerre	New Courses have been taken to the Planning Committee and the RSB.		
2.1.6	Augment opportunities for student travel and beyond-the-classroom experiences.	Leadership Team	A partnership with a French school has been established. We have also entered into an exchange program with a school in Germany.		
2.1.7	Develop a reimagined FIRC course to equip freshmen to succeed at MLWGS	Dr. Lowerre and Culture Sub-Committee	A sub-committee has been formed to review FIRC and re-imagine the freshman experience. A new model will be presented to the RSB in the Spring of 2024. FIRC is now MLWGS 101 and reflects the needs of the 21Century learner.		
<b>OBJ 2.2</b>	<b>Teachers will provide engaging, student-centered instruction.</b>				
2.2.1	Encourage teachers to enhance student engagement, embed community engagement, and integrate instructional technology within their curricula.	Leadership Team, Tech Integrators	Following the COVID pandemic, a renewed effort to assess and implement student-centered learning strategies has been taking place.		
2.2.2	Provide opportunities for teachers to participate in training and collegial discussions about enhancing student engagement, embedding community engagement, and integrating instructional technology within their curricula.	Admin	Departments have been reaching out to the community to bring in alumni and others to enhance instruction and learning. A trip to TJ SciTech was completed in November 2023.		

2.2.3	Incentivize teachers to enhance student engagement, embed community engagement, and integrate instructional technology within their curricula.	Admin			
<b>GOAL 3</b>	<b>MAGGIE L. WALER GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL WILL BE A SAFE SCHOOL WITH EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES.</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Measure- Ment</b>	<b>Year to begin Implemen- tation</b>	<b>Cost to Budget</b>
<b>OBJ 3.1</b>	<b>Create and fund a ten-year capital improvement plan.</b>			<b>2023</b>	
3.1.1	Conduct a needs assessment of future needs for the facility and technology.	Facilities and Technology	Project is underway		
3.1.2	Forecast ten-year costs.	Facilities and Technology			
<b>OBJ 3.2</b>	<b>Create a better experience for students, teachers, and parents through available software solutions.</b>			<b>2021</b>	
3.1.3	Implemental funding mechanism separate from the operating budget.	Mr. Smith	The issue has been discussed by the RSB.		
3.2.1	Purchase of on-line teacher receipting program.	Ms. Hoover; Ms. Charity	An web based fee payment program has been implemented.		
3.2.2	Implement field trip request and tracking software.	Mr. Smith	Online system has been put in place with appropriate policy changes.		
3.2.3	Integrate field trip software with student information system.	Mr. Bortz			
3.2.4	Reduce student fees.	Leadership Team	We have reduced fees where we could, but many of the fees are simply pass-through accounts.		
3.2.5	Incentivize the use of current on-line payment systems.	Dr. Lowerre	Budgeted and Completed.		
<b>OBJ 3.3</b>	<b>Enhance our safe school environment.</b>			<b>2020</b>	
3.3.1	Implement an annual climate survey.	Dr. Lowerre	Participation in the Virginia School Climate Survey. Jan 2022		
3.3.2	Complete a full revision of the safety/crisis plan.	Mr. Smith	Completed Fall 2021		
3.3.3	Further develop relations with local fire, police, and EMS in order to incorporate best practices and facilitate external audits.	Mr. Jordan	Completed Fall 2021		



3.3.4	Train faculty on cyber security and teaching digital literacy.	Library and Technology	New training regarding AI and ChatGBT has been offered.		
<b>OBJ 3.4</b>	<b>Transition the fiscal expectations of MLWGS to a new fiscal agent.</b>			<b>2022</b>	
3.4.1	Research options for future fiscal processing.	Mr. Smith	Discussions have taken place with the superintendents.		
3.4.2	Secure board approval for a new fiscal agent.	Dr. Lowerre	Discussions have begun		
3.4.3	Create a transition plan.	Ms. Hoover			